

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES FOR THE LEARN TO BEAR HUNT PROGRAM:

As with any program, there are guidelines in place to facilitate successfully achieve the goals of the program. Consequently, these guidelines have been developed to achieve the goals of the program, ensure consistent implementation of the Learn to Bear Hunt program across the state, and provide for a safe and enjoyable LTBH experience for everyone involved.

CLASS A LEARN TO BEAR HUNT PROGRAM

The Number of Tags Allocated to the LTBH Program in 2008

For 2008, the number of tags to be allocated to the Learn to Bear Hunt Program will be determined based on the capacity of DNR Conservation Wardens and Wildlife Biologists to conduct the hunts, but will not exceed 70. The tags will be allocated via a centralized application process and subsequent random drawing.

For 2008, up to five (5) of the tags will be allocated through statewide conservation organizations such as the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, and the Conservation Congress. The participants for these tags will be selected via a Department approved selection process of the respective organization. Once selected, the participant will then be coupled with a mentor and sponsoring warden/wildlife manager.

Selection of Participants

- Selection of participants will be done by using a statewide application available via DNR internet or by applying at DNR Service Centers. Novice hunters age 10 and up are encouraged to apply, and the application must be post marked by June 30, 2008. In early July, the Bureau of Law Enforcement will randomly draw participants.
- Selected participants who prefer to hunt over bait will be coupled with mentors who expressed interest in mentoring bait sitting LTBH events. Participants who prefer to hunt with hounds will be coupled with mentors who expressed interest in mentoring hound LTBH events. To the extent possible, participants will also be matched by expressed geographic preference to mentors and sponsoring wardens/wildlife managers.
- To extent possible, participants will be coupled with mentors that will require the least amounts of travel for the participants to reduce costs and the carbon footprint of events.
- Each Participant will be coupled with a local sponsoring conservation warden or Wildlife Biologist.
- Only “novice hunters” are eligible to be selected as a participant in the Learn to Bear Hunt Program. A “novice hunter” for the purpose of the Learn to Bear Hunt Program is:

1. Someone who has not participated in a Learn to Bear Hunt in the past.
2. A person age 10 and older with less than two years of hunting experience of any kind.

Mentor selection and expectations

- Mentors who are selected for these hunts understand the importance of leading by example by conducting hunts in a safe, legal, ethical and responsible manner that projects a positive image of hunters and the sport of hunting.
- The size of the group of mentors should be limited to aid in coordinating and managing the events. Up to six adult mentors, and one youth mentor if a youth participant is involved, may be involved in a LTBH event. Mentoring groups are encouraged to have a combination of male and female adult mentors in the group to demonstrate that hunting is an inclusive sport. If there are multiple mentors involved in an event, one mentor must be designated as the lead mentor. Under no circumstance should there be more than seven (7) mentors involved in the hunt.
- In addition to the participant, for participants 17 and under, up to two legal guardians and any siblings of the participant may also go along on a hunt.
- All listed mentors, whether hunting over bait or with hounds, who will be participating in the LTBH event are required to attend the four hour training day activity. This enables the participant and immediate family to get comfortable with those mentoring them and also ensures all mentors are on the same page and know what is expected of them. Family members or guardians who will be riding with the youth are encouraged to attend the training day.
- Mentor applications will be made available on the DNR website and must be post marked by June 30, 2008. This is necessary to ensure there is time to complete necessary background inquiries. Mentors are required to list the DMU and an adjoining DMU they plan to hunt in on the application form. This will enable the hunts to be better managed, allocated and spaced across the state, as well as aid in assigning participants to mentors based on geographical preference and proximity where possible. If multiple mentors or mentor groups select the same DMU, a random drawing will be held to determine which group will mentor the participant. The members of a mentor group that is not selected may cooperatively combine groups with the selected mentors as long as no more than 6 mentors in total participate in the LTBH. If there are multiple mentors participating in an event, all mentors must be listed on the back side of the Mentor application form. For all mentors listed for participation in a Learn to Bear Hunt program, a records review will be done for each mentor listed prior to each event to ensure there are no indications the individual is unsuitable for the activity.

Learn to Hunt Event Requirements

1. All Learn to Bear Hunts will be assigned a local conservation warden or Wildlife Biologist to act as a field liaison to the event. A field warden or wildlife biologist

- will be designated as the primary contact and be present at all Learn to Hunt events.
2. Wildlife Staff, or a person designated and authorized by the Wildlife program, will participate in the training date, presenting on bear life history and management practices. Wardens will cover bear hunting ethics, firearm safety, rules and regulations specific to bear hunting at all Learn to Bear Hunt Events.
 3. Only firearms should be used for Learn to Bear Hunt events. There will be a live fire component at each training day to ensure the participant is familiar and adequately proficient with the firearm they will be using on the hunt, whether it be their own firearm or a borrowed firearm.
 4. Either the sponsoring warden or wildlife manager, or a mentor designated by the warden or wildlife manager, should be in possession of a firearm to help ensure the safety of the participants.
 5. Only tags distributed by the Department for the express use in the Learn to Bear Hunt Program can be used for Learn to Bear hunt Events. Tags transferred to youth may not be used for the Learn to Bear Hunt Program which takes place during the closed season.
 6. Where possible, efforts should be made to conduct LTBH programs in conjunction with a partner conservation organization. Using this approach increases the capacity of the program to hold more hunts, aids in providing the additional resources needed to put on a LTBH program, creates relationships between the Department and the organization, provides an activity for the conservation organization to work together on, and contributes to the future vitality of conservation organizations that are critical to future conservation efforts in the state.
- All LTBH program participants and mentors shall comply with all applicable hunting regulations, including zone restrictions when hunting with hounds.
 - The hunt portion of the program should not take place prior to the third weekend in August.

Class B Learn to Bear Hunt Program

The Class B LTBH Program is basically the same as the Class A program, with the exception that a bear is not harvested. The Class B program allows for a novice hunter to participate with a LTBH warden using dogs or observing a bear bait location. The Class B LTBH program provides for a waiver of the Class B Bear License for the novice participant.

Since there is no harvest tag involved in Class B LTBH programs, all aspects of these programs are planned, organized and held locally. There is no central selection process of participants or mentors for Class B LTBH programs.

The following elements apply to a Class B LTBH Program:

- Mentors must have a background suitable for being a mentor.
- There must be a training day associated with the event that follows the Class A training day lesson plan, with the exception that a firearms session is not mandatory.
- Class B participants are eligible to apply for future Class A LTBH events.

Disclaimer: This document is intended solely as guidance and does not contain any mandatory requirements except where requirements found in statute or administrative rule are referenced. This guidance does not establish or affect legal rights or obligations and is not finally determinative of any of the issues addressed. This guidance does not create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the State of Wisconsin or the Department of Natural Resources. Any regulatory decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources in any matter addressed by this guidance will be made by applying the governing statutes and administrative rules to the relevant facts.

